

REMARKS

Claims 18-34 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 18, 29 and 34 are amended for clarity. Support for amended claims 18, 29 and 34 can be found at least at Figs. 7 and 9. No new matter is added.

The Office Action rejects claims 18-34 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Murata et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,445,833, hereinafter "Murata"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Murata does not disclose a calculating step of calculating Z-values of each pixel based on only image data for that pixel, the pixels forming an image, each Z-value being assigned to a pixel, and each Z-value representing a depth of an object corresponding to the pixel, as recited in independent claims 18, 29 and 34.

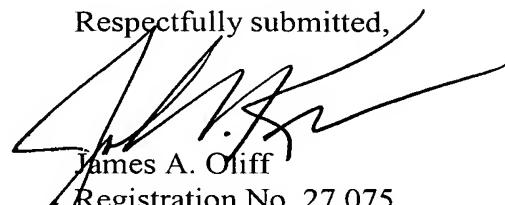
The Office Action asserts that Murata discloses the recited calculating step at column 7, lines 25-39. Applicants respectfully disagree. Murata discloses a first step of extracting a perspective image characteristic value of each of plural parallax calculation regions. Specifically, Murata discloses the perspective image characteristic is calculated in each of parallax calculation regions E1-E12, which includes two or more pixels. Murata discloses the perspective image characteristic in each of the parallax calculation regions E1-E12 includes a single integration luminance value, a single high-frequency component integration value, a single luminance contrast and a single integration choroma value. Further, Murata discloses that depth information is calculated for each of the parallax calculation regions E1-E12 based on these values.

In other words, Murata's depth information is calculated for each of the parallax calculation regions E1-E12. See column 15, lines 20-27, and column 21, lines 52-65 and Fig. 14 of Murata. Thus, Murata discloses calculating depth information for groups of pixels. Therefore, Murata does not disclose the Z-value of each pixel.

Thus, Murata does not disclose a calculating step of calculating Z-values of each pixel, as recited in claims 18, 29 and 34. Therefore, independent claims 18, 29 and 34 define patentable subject matter. Claims 19-28 and 30-33 depend from claims 18 and 29, respectively, and therefore also define patentable subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 18-34 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment:

Request for Continued Examination
Petition for Extension of time

Date: August 8, 2008

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